



United States Department of Agriculture

RESEARCH, EDUCATION, AND ECONOMICS  
AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH SERVICE  
[www.ars.usda.gov](http://www.ars.usda.gov)

*"Solving Problems for the Growing World"*

**VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT**

**Announcement Number:** ARS-X5W-0418  
Demo/Alternative Merit Promotion

**Position Title/Series/Grade:**  
Animal Caretaker (Tractor Operator)  
WG-5048-06

**Promotion Potential:** WG-6

**Employment Type:** Full-time Permanent Appointment

**Grade and Salary Range:**  
WG-06 \$15.15 - \$17.67 Per Hour

**Location of Position:**  
National Animal Disease Center, Ames, Iowa

**Who Can Apply:**  
All U.S. Citizens (Local Commuting Area Only)  
(You **must** include a statement in your application that you are a U.S. citizen to be considered for this position)

**Opening Date:** September 12, 2005

**Closing Date:** September 26, 2005

For copies of vacancy announcements and/or application materials, please call (301) 504-1482. For additional information regarding employment opportunities, please visit <http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/hrd/jobs/apply.htm>.

**Contact Information**

**Human Resources Specialist:**  
Jennifer Riddle  
(301) 504-1395

**Location Contact Information:**  
Kim Grandon  
515-663-7277

**DC Relay Service:** (202) 855-1234 (TDD)

**Send Applications to:**  
USDA, Agricultural Research Service  
Human Resources Division, WSB  
Attn: Jennifer Riddle  
5601 Sunnyside Avenue, Stop 5106  
Beltsville, MD 20705-5106  
**Fax:** (301) 504-1535  
**E-mail:** [scirecruit@ars.usda.gov](mailto:scirecruit@ars.usda.gov)

Applications must be postmarked, e-mailed or faxed by the closing date of the announcement. Applications received in Government envelopes will not be considered.

Please take advantage of the Application Package Checklist at the end of this announcement to ensure your application is complete.

**Applications will also be accepted from USDA Surplus and Federal Displaced Employees in the commuting area.**

**SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS:**

**This position requires the selectee to undergo a pre-employment check and a full background investigation. Any offer made is considered a tentative job offer pending the outcome of the pre-employment check. Retention in the position is based upon a favorable adjudication of the background investigation. The incumbent will be subject to periodic reinvestigations.**

**Major Duties:**

The incumbent provides care for and maintains identification of several species of domestic, wildlife and small laboratory animals. Maintains animal facilities in a clean and sanitary condition; disinfects and sanitizes equipment after cleaning; milks lactating animals; performs husbandry procedures such as tagging, trimming feet, weaning, and artificial insemination; uses proper methods in restraining and handling of animals to avoid injury to the animals or personnel. Observes and reports any sign of disease and/or changes in behavior or appearance of animals; balances animal diets; takes and records temperatures; collects samples of blood, secretions, and excretions, using proper techniques to prevent contamination; reports history of each animal's medical treatment, physical state, diet, feed, and water consumption, and samples taken; treats injuries and illnesses according to specific instructions; assists animals at time of birth, and cares for offspring. Follows prescribed principles in the care and humane treatment of animals; adheres to strict sanitary requirements; maintains strict isolation to prevent exposure of animals to contamination and to preserve the validity of the experiment. Operates large farm equipment such as vans, trucks and tractors up to 100 HP with various equipment attached, skid steer loader and milking machines. Maintains grounds in and around animal facilities, and assists in training of other animal caretakers.

**Physical Requirements:** Requires heavy physical effort in handling large animals, including lifting and carrying of animals, equipment, feed and bedding up to 100 pounds. Stooping, bending, reaching, and active walking are also required.

**Working Conditions:** Work is performed both indoors and outdoors. The incumbent is subjected to extremes in temperatures and to inclement weather. Various forms of respiratory equipment must be worn when working with certain infectious agents and chemicals. The incumbent is also subjected to disagreeable odors, physical injury from animals, and exposure to the hazard of bites, kicks, and other trauma associated with the handling of diseased animals. The incumbent will often be required to shower and change clothes, boots, and gloves between all isolation areas entered on the same day. The incumbent is designated as an exigency employee and must report to or remain at the work site: 1) regardless of extreme weather or other emergency conditions; and 2) during budget shutdowns. Must be willing to work weekends and holidays.

**Qualifications:** Applicants must have experience and/or training of sufficient scope and quality to perform the duties required. Applicants will be rated in accordance with their knowledge and skill in the job elements listed below.

1. Ability to do the work of an Animal Caretaker (Tractor Operator) without more than normal supervision. (Screen Out Element)
2. Ability to operate a tractor and farm equipment. (Screen Out Element)
3. Ability to work in a scientific environment.
4. Ability to follow and interpret animal care procedures.
5. Knowledge of the practice, purpose and concept of disinfection, isolation and safety.

**Physical Examination Is Required.**

**Certification / License Requirements:** All applicants **MUST** possess a valid State Driver's License.

**Supplemental Questionnaire:** Applicants will be required to complete a supplemental questionnaire. The questionnaire **IS ATTACHED**. Applicants who fail to complete and return the questionnaire **WILL NOT** receive further consideration for the position.

## **Other Important Information**

### **Benefits Package:**

A Benefits Package is authorized for this position. Additional information about Federal benefits can be obtained at [www.usajobs.opm.gov/ei61.htm](http://www.usajobs.opm.gov/ei61.htm).

### **Veteran's Preference:**

For further details, call the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) at 478-757-3000 or TDD 478-744-2299. Select General Information on the Federal Employment Policies and Procedures, and then Veterans Preference and Special Appointing Authorities for Veterans. Visit their VetGuide website at <http://www.opm.gov/veterans/html/vetguide.asp>.

### **Relocation Expenses:**

Payment of relocation expenses will be determined in accordance with P&P 412.5, Recruitment and Retention Incentives and Other Special Pay, Sections 6 and 7, as amended by Bulletin 03-402, which may be found at: [http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/hrd/staffing\\_recruit/reloweb.htm](http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/hrd/staffing_recruit/reloweb.htm).

### **Financial Disclosure Requirement:**

Federal employees are subject to prohibitions against officially dealing with outside organizations in which they have a financial interest. You may be required to submit a financial disclosure report if hired for this position.

### **False statements:**

If you make a false statement in any part of your application, you may not be hired; may be fired after beginning work; or may be fined or jailed.

### **Optional Form 306, (Declaration for Federal Employment):**

If you are selected for this position, you will be required to complete this form before an offer may be made.

### **USDA Surplus/Federal Displaced Employees:**

USDA Surplus/Federal displaced employees must submit documentary evidence of eligibility. Well qualified surplus and displaced employees within the local commuting area will receive selection priority as provided by OPM regulations. Well-qualified means the applicant meets the basic qualification and eligibility requirements and all selective placement factors; is rated above minimally qualified against the KSAs or quality criteria; and is able to satisfactorily perform the duties of the position upon entry. Applicants must submit the following:

- 1) a copy of your RIF Separation Notice or Certification of Expected Separation or other documentation indicating that you are a surplus employee;
- 2) evidence of full performance level of current position;
- 3) a copy of your most recent performance appraisal; and
- 4) a copy of your most recent SF-50, Notification of Personnel Action, to verify reassignment eligibility.

**Selective Service System:**

Males over age 18 who were born after December 31, 1959, must have registered with the Selective Service System (or have an exemption) to be eligible for Federal employment.

**Reasonable Accommodation:**

Reasonable accommodation is provided to applicants with disabilities. If you need a reasonable accommodation for any part of the application and hiring process, or have questions regarding reasonable accommodation and/or accessibility for any part of the application and hiring process, please contact the Disability Program Manager on 202-720-6161 or through the DC Relay Service on 202-855-1234 (TDD). The decision to grant reasonable accommodation is made on a case-by-case basis.

**Civil Rights Policy Statement:**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is an equal opportunity employer and provider. Discrimination is prohibited in all USDA programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's Target Center on 202-720-2600 (voice and TDD).

**To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call 202-720-5964 (voice and TDD).**

## Application Package Checklist

**If application packages do not contain all of the requested information, you may lose consideration for the job. To help you ensure your application fully outlines your qualifications and eligibility for this position, please submit the following documentation.**

- ☐ Optional Form 612 (Optional Application for Federal Employment), SF-171 (Application for Federal Employment), Resume, Curriculum Vitae, or other document outlining your qualifications (Go to <http://www.opm.gov/forms/html/of.asp> and scroll down to obtain the OF-612).

**The following information is required of all applicants:**

- ☐ Announcement number, title, and grade(s) of the position
- ☐ Full name, mailing address (including zip code) and day and evening phone numbers (with area code)
- ☐ Social security number
- ☐ Statement that you are a U.S. citizen (if not using the OF-612 or SF-171)
- ☐ Copy of DD Form 214 (Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty) (if claiming veterans preference) (Visit <http://www.opm.gov/veterans/html/vetguide.asp> for additional information).
- ☐ SF-15 (Application for 10-point Veteran's Preference) plus the support documentation required by this form (if claiming 10-point veterans preference) (Go to the web site at <http://www.opm.gov/forms/html/sf.asp> to obtain form.)
- ☐ Paid and non-paid work experience related to the position. For each period of work experience include:
  - \_\_\_ Job title
  - \_\_\_ Series/grade (if Federal employment)
  - \_\_\_ Duties and accomplishments
  - \_\_\_ Employer's name and address
  - \_\_\_ Supervisor's name and contact information
  - \_\_\_ Starting and ending dates of employment (at least month & year)
  - \_\_\_ Number of hours worked per week
  - \_\_\_ Salary
  - \_\_\_ Indicate if we may contact current supervisor/employer
- ☐ Other job related information, such as training courses (title & year); skills (e.g., other languages, computer software/hardware, tools, etc.)
  - \_\_\_ Certificates/licenses (current)
  - \_\_\_ Honors, awards, and special accomplishments
  - \_\_\_ Supplemental questionnaire if applicable (usually for Federal Wage System positions - WG, WL, WS)
- ☐ Copy of college transcripts (if qualifying all or in part on the basis of education for this position) (If you have non-conventional education, e.g., foreign study, continuing education units, life experience, etc., go to the web site at <http://www.opm.gov/qualifications/SEC-II/s2-e4.htm#e4a> and look under the heading "Other Education" for information governing acceptability of this type of education.)

- ☐ Copy of SF-50 (Notification of Personnel Action) to verify possession of competitive civil service status (if you are a current or previous federal employee)
- ☐ Copy of most recent performance appraisal (if you are a current federal employee)
- ☐ Second copy of application package (if the position is open to candidates outside the federal government AND if you are a current federal employee or a candidate with reinstatement eligibility and wish to be considered under both merit promotion and competitive examining procedures).
- ☐ Support documentation for eligibility for special hiring authorities, such as disability, Peace Corps service, etc. (If you have questions about whether you are eligible for a particular hiring authority, please call the servicing HR specialist or visit the web site at <http://www.usajobs.opm.gov/a2.htm> and scroll down to the subject heading, "Category".)
- ☐ Support documentation if you are a USDA surplus or federal displaced employee (See pertinent section under "Other Important Information" below.)
- ☐ Self-certification of typing speed (if required as a basic qualification for the position)
- ☐ While not required, a separate response to the required knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs listed under Specialized Experience) and Selective Placement Factor(s), if present, for this position may better highlight your specific qualifications for this position. (For an explanation of KSAs, go to the web site at <http://www.ars.usda.gov/careers/whatksa.html> ).

**If this is your first time applying for a federal job, or if you wish to view more detailed information about various aspects of applying for federal jobs, go to <http://www.opm.gov/forms/html/of.asp> and scroll down to access the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Optional Form 510.**

**SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONNAIRE**  
**Animal Caretaker (Tractor Operator), WG-5048-06**

**Print Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

Please provide complete answers to each of the following questions. Your answers will assist the Human Resources Specialist in determining your qualifications for this position. Failure to provide sufficient information may result in losing consideration for this position.

**ELEMENT 1, 25-E &85: ABILITY TO DO THE WORK OF AN ANIMAL CARETAKER WITHOUT MORE THAN NORMAL SUPERVISION (Screen Out Element)**

1. Describe in detail, any animal care experiences you have had while providing animal care with the following: **WILDLIFE** (elk, bison, white-tail deer, raccoons); **SWINE** (including farrowing, post-natal care, animal health, and total confinement operation); **DAIRY CATTLE** (including types of milking parlors, heat detection, ability to perform artificial insemination, parturition, post-natal care, and animal health); **BEEF CATTLE** ( including animal health, cow/calf operation, feedlot experience, calving and post-natal care); **SHEEP** (including animal health, breeding, lambing, post-natal care and shearing; OR various **SMALL LABORATORY ANIMALS** . Please list the highest number of each species that you have provided animal care for at any given time and specify if these animals were housed in confinement operations, feedlots, bio-containment facilities or natural settings.

2. Describe in detail, the animal care work you have done that required you to handle animals. Describe the types of manual and chemical restraint you used and why. Explain how you have handled or moved animals while in their flight zone and how you avoided injury to personnel and animals while doing so.

3. Describe your experience detecting unusual behavior in animals under your care and explain how you were able to tell the difference between behavior and clinical signs of disease. Which animal diseases are you able to detect clinical signs of and explain how you learned to do so? What type of environments did you observe these in (examples, farm setting, confinement operation, research)?

4. Describe your work in which you performed with the least amount of supervision and the greatest degree of initiative or independence.

5. Have you had the responsibility for directing others in animal care? ☐ YES ☐ NO

6. Describe how you initiated any programs to provide animal enrichment, animal welfare, animal conditioning and humane euthanasia for animals in your care.

#### **ELEMENT 6: ABILITY TO OPERATE A TRACTOR AND FARM EQUIPMENT (Screen Out Element)**

1. Please describe the types and sizes of tractors you have operated.

2. What types of tractor mounted attachments or other farm equipments/vehicles have you used that would be associated with animal care duties?

3. Describe what types of complex operations you have performed while operating the equipment listed above.

#### **ELEMENT 105 & 106: ABILITY TO WORK IN A SCIENTIFIC ENVIRONMENT**

1. Have you ever kept medical records on animals you have provided care for? ☐ YES ☐ NO  
If yes, explain in detail what information you put in the records and why.



2. Have you ever had to interpret and follow written or oral instructions from a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine on a routine basis? ☐ YES ☐ NO

If yes, describe your experience.

3. Describe your ability to follow procedures to minimize unwanted variables, i.e., cleaning pens in a specific order to avoid cross-contamination between pens, keeping feeding and cleaning schedules close to the same time each day to help animals become accustomed to routine.

4. Have you completed any formal animal care training or certification courses? ☐ YES ☐ NO

If yes, give course name, dates of courses.

#### **ELEMENT 75-B: ABILITY TO FOLLOW AND INTERPRET ANIMAL CARE PROCEDURES**

1. Have you ever had to decide, on an emergency basis, what independent action to take with animals that were fighting, had escaped, or were ill? ☐ YES ☐ NO

If yes, describe what you did.

2. Tell about any experience you have had in selecting proper feed for animals. What did you consider when selecting proper feed for animals? What did you consider when selecting the type and amount of feed?

3. In your care of animals, state how you followed specific schedules (examples: feeding animals at specified time; and cleaning barns, grounds, pens, etc.) Did you establish the schedule to follow or did you follow a schedule already created by someone else?

4. Have you:

- |   |                              |                             |
|---|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| mixed feed ingredients to make a prescribed diet? | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO |
| applied chemical on animals?                      | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO |
| used chemical in diets?                           | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO |
| collected samples from animals?                   | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO |

If you answered yes to any, describe in detail and give examples of what and why you did it.

**ELEMENT 25-A: KNOWLEDGE OF THE PRACTICE, PURPOSE AND CONCEPT OF DISINFECTION, ISOLATION, AND SAFETY**

1. Describe any previous experience you may have had requiring isolation of animals to prevent spread of disease.

2. Under what conditions have you maintained control of animals - bio-containment or confinement pens, open outside pens, etc? What kind(s) of animals were you working with?

3. Describe any experience you may have had in cleaning and disinfecting animal facilities and how you chose which procedure and product to use.

4. Tell about any animal care procedures or duties you did where you had to observe safety rules to avoid injuring yourself, co-workers, or animals in hazardous situations.

5. Have you had any formal safety training or licensing courses? ☐ YES ☐ NO  
If yes, give course name, dates of course.

6. List all accidents within the last five years. Include date, nature of accident, and who was at fault.

List any safety awards received.

<u>DATE</u>	<u>REASON FOR THE SAFETY AWARD</u>
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Do You Have Knowledge:

Of any reason that may prevent you from wearing respiratory protection equipment?

If you answered YES to the above question, please explain.

Do you have a valid motor vehicle operator's license?    ☐ YES                      ☐ NO

I certify that the above answers are true to the best of my knowledge.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Applicant's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date